
NEWS RELEASE

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New Internet Sites Can Help Teens, Adults Manage Diabetes

With diabetes on the rise nationwide and in Missouri, the state Department of Health and Senior Services is recommending two new Internet sites to help Missourians more effectively deal with the disease.

Nearly 337,000 Missourians reported that they had diabetes in 2005, compared to slightly more than 300,000 just two years earlier.

“Making healthy lifestyle choices is important for everyone but especially for those living with diabetes,” Gov. Matt Blunt said. “I encourage Missourians with diabetes to take advantage of these new Internet sites to help them make informed decisions that will help them stay healthy.”

“Diabetes is a life-threatening condition, but healthy choices can help people live with the disease and avoid or delay many of its complications such as heart attack, stroke, amputation and kidney disease,” said Victoria Warren, coordinator of the health department’s Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. “Most people with diabetes can manage their disease and enjoy a good quality of life.”

Two new online resources can help people with diabetes learn more about their condition and make healthy lifestyle choices.

- Tips for Teens with Diabetes is a new Internet site designed to help teenagers and their parents understand the importance of managing diabetes to reduce its complications. This resource can be found at <http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org>.
- Diabetes Foodsmart, a new electronic newsletter from the American Diabetes Association, offers information and recipes to help people with diabetes make healthy food choices. Focusing on fresh, simple, seasonal food for health living, each newsletter will feature a seasonal theme. The newsletter will be published every other week and can be found at <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetesfoodsmart>.

“We encourage people with diabetes to use these resources and others to learn more about ways to prepare healthy foods that taste good and incorporate more physical activity into their daily routine,” Warren said. “Following your doctor’s recommendations, eating a healthy diet, participating in daily exercise and maintaining a healthy weight are vital to dealing with diabetes.”

While there are three main types of diabetes – type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes – most people have type 2. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and whole grains, regular physical activity and modest weight loss can significantly reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. This could delay the onset of the disease or prevent it altogether, according to the health department.

Health officials encourage Missourians to learn the signs and symptoms of the diabetes. While some people with the disease will not experience any symptoms, others will have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme hunger
- Sudden vision changes
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Feeling tired much of the time
- Very dry skin
- Sores that are slow to heal
- More infections than usual

The health department recommends that everyone over 45 years of age visit a health care provider for an initial diabetes screening. This should be followed by a screening every three years for individuals with a healthy weight and no other risk factors such as a family history of diabetes or high blood pressure or they are a member of a high-risk ethnic group including African American, Hispanic/Latino or American Indian. Anyone with one or more risk factors for diabetes, regardless of age, should be screened annually.

People with diabetes should see a health care provider every three to six months or more often depending on how well their diabetes is controlled or if they have complications from the disease.

More information about diabetes can be found at: www.dhss.mo.gov/diabetes/.

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